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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala

Revised estimates under section 3, Peace-keeping operations and special missions, section 32, Staff assessment, and income section 1, Income from staff assessment

Tenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 20 November 1995 on revised estimates under section 3, Peace-keeping operations and special missions, section 32, Staff assessment, and income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/C.5/50/26).

2. The Advisory Committee recalls that the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 48/267 of 19 September 1994 for an initial period of six months, with the mandate to verify implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights (A/48/928-S/1994/448, annex I), signed by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) at Mexico City on 29 March 1994.

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3. In its resolution 49/220 A of 23 December 1994, the General Assembly approved an appropriation of $10,069,600 for MINUGUA, including a complement of 113 international staff (51 at the Professional level, 35 General Service and 27 Field Service) and 135 Local level staff, in addition to 72 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), 10 military observers and 60 civilian police.

4. In its resolution 49/236 A of 31 March 1995, the General Assembly decided to authorize the renewal of the mandate of the Mission for a further period of six months. Prior to the adoption of that resolution and based on the oral report of the Advisory Committee on the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/49/61), the Fifth Committee informed the General Assembly that an additional appropriation of $10,069,600 would be required for the biennium 1994-1995 for activities during the period from 1 April to 30 September 1995, and that, should the Assembly decide to extend the mandate of MINUGUA beyond September 1995, the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed $4,711,500 under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for activities during the period from 1 October to 31 December 1995.

5. For the period beyond September 1995, the Mission has been carrying out the mandate entrusted to it under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and operating on the basis of the commitment authority granted to the Secretary-General.

6. In its resolution 49/236 B of 14 September 1995, the General Assembly, inter alia, decided to authorize the renewal of the mandate of the Mission for a further period of six months, until 18 March 1996 in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General submitted in his report (A/49/955), which, among other things, outlined the new activities to be undertaken by MINUGUA. The new activities emanate mainly from the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG, signed at Mexico City on 31 March 1995 (A/49/882-S/1995/256, annex).

7. The report of the Secretary-General under consideration (A/C.5/50/26) contains estimates under section 3, Peace-keeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. It also outlines the additional requirements resulting from the extension of the mandate of MINUGUA in 1996 and requests an appropriation of $7,299,800 for 1996-1997 for the period from 1 January to 31 March 1996.

8. As indicated in paragraph 8 of the report, it is estimated that a reinforcement of the staffing of MINUGUA would be required, consisting of 14 additional international staff (1 P-5, 2 P-4, 4 P-3, 3 P-2 and 4 General Service, of whom 3 would be Security Officers) and 10 Local level posts, in addition to 34 UNVs. The additional staffing requirements, excluding the Local level posts, are shown in tables 1 and 2 of the report. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, in addition, 14 consultants are being funded by the Trust Fund for the Guatemala Peace Process.

9. For reasons given in paragraphs 10 and 11 of his report, the Secretary-General is requesting an additional P-5 post in the Office of the Director of the Mission. As can be seen from table 1 of the report, of the 10 Professional

level posts in the Office of the Director, 3 posts are at the P-5 level, while overall there are 8 P-5 posts for the Mission. The Advisory Committee is not convinced that an additional P-5 post for the Mission is justified and believes that, with an overall restructuring and streamlining of the functions being performed by the current number of staff at the P-5 level, the political requirements of the Mission could be met within existing resources.

10. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 12 of the report that three additional Professional posts (two P-4 and one P-3) have been requested to undertake responsibilities arising from the signing of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Committee was informed that at the present time there was only one staff member at the P-5 level assigned to the unit to deal with the tasks outlined in paragraph 12 of the report; the Committee was also informed that no consultancy services were being provided to the unit. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that the three additional posts (two P-4 and one P-3) be approved.

11. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 14 of the report that the eight regional offices were originally staffed by eight Regional Coordinators and eight Political Affairs Officers. However, five of the eight Political Affairs Officers were subsequently assigned to head the subregional offices. The request being made therefore is for the provision of six additional posts (three P-3 and three P-2) to replace the five Political Affairs Officer posts vacated in the regional offices and to reinforce the Guatemala City regional office. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the additional posts.

12. The Advisory Committee's views on the utilization of UNVs for providing a wide range of services in peace-keeping and other missions have been reflected in its report on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of United Nations peace-keeping missions (A/49/664), as well as its reports on individual missions. UNVs are able to provide these services at a relatively low cost. The Advisory Committee recommends that the possibility be explored of having the tasks to be performed in the regional offices (which are, in any case, headed by Regional Coordinators) undertaken by UNVs, appropriately supervised, instead of international staff.

13. As indicated in paragraph 17 of the report of the Secretary-General, an additional eight Volunteers would be assigned to the eight regional offices to carry out education and promotion tasks, coordinated by the MINUGUA Education and Promotion Unit, which, in conjunction with the Indigenous Affairs Unit, would design a comprehensive training programme aimed at indigenous leaders, civil and military authorities and non-governmental organizations. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of this proposal.

14. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the request for four additional General Service staff, as proposed in paragraphs 8 and 19 of the report. The Committee also recommends an increase of 5 Local level staff instead of the 10 indicated in paragraph 20 of the report. On inquiry, the Committee was informed that the existing 135 Local level staff were working as security watchmen, drivers, secretaries and warehouse and logistics clerks, and performing administrative and financial duties.

15. On inquiry, the Advisory Committee was also informed that all the posts had been fully costed. Given the fact that it is not anticipated that all of the posts will be filled by 1 January 1996, the Committee recommends that full costing of the Professional posts would not be necessary and that these posts should be costed at 50 per cent.

16. The Advisory Committee believes that there are other areas of the estimates where savings could be realized. In the annex to the report, an amount of $29,900 has been indicated for consultancy services for the period from 1 January to 31 March 1996. From the information provided to it, the Advisory Committee believes that the services to be provided may be somewhat similar and may even overlap with the services being provided by the existing 14 consultants. While the Committee does not object to the request, it recommends that the possibility be explored of financing these services from the Trust Fund.

17. As indicated in the annex to the report, an amount of $280,000 has been estimated for the rental and maintenance of one fixed-wing aircraft for a period of three months at a monthly rate of $27,500 for 25 flight hours per month ($82,500) and 10 additional hours ($10,500), plus insurance and allowances ($23,500); and a tactical utility helicopter for 40 hours per month at a rate of $51,000 per month ($153,000) and 10 additional hours at a rate of $300 per hour ($9,000), plus allowances ($1,500). The Advisory Committee recommends that the contract for the rental of aircraft should be renegotiated on an "as required" basis.

18. With regard to freight and related costs in the amount of $237,400 (calculated on the basis of 18 per cent of the estimated value of the vehicles), the Advisory Committee believes that some savings could be achieved if vehicles and other equipment were obtained from other missions in the area.

19. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the report does not indicate clearly the role of other United Nations agencies and programmes in the area vis-à-vis MINUGUA and also does not reflect the extrabudgetary resources available to it. The Advisory Committee requests that this information be included in the next budget presentation for MINUGUA.

20. Taking into account its comments and observations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that an additional appropriation of $7,124,800 under section 3, Peace-keeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 would be required for the period from 1 January to 31 March 1996. An additional appropriation of $554,800 would be required under section 32, Staff assessment, offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

21. Should the General Assembly decide to extend the mandate of MINUGUA beyond 31 March 1996, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be authorized to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding a monthly level of $2,329,700 for the duration of the mandate.